

Brigitte RussellHilts
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The Honorable Judge James K Bredar

I, Brigitte Russell-Hilts mother of Brandon Russell have known him all his life and am writing to ask you to take into consideration that Brandon is not just the person that was present to you in court. I understand the seriousness of the charges and want to share insight into his character to aid your decision.

Brandon was born July 1st 1995 in Boca Raton Florida. Not long after I had graduated college. I was a single parent trying to do the best I could. I needed all the help I could get and my parents were there for me. Throughout his life his father was in and out. He would disappear for years at a time then return and disappear again. I feel over the years he has been searching for something to fill the void in his life that he has felt from not really having a father.

Brandon as a child was very loving, always wanting hugs and affection. While I was working he was at home with a nanny. She would even come and take him to church with her some Sunday's. When in preschool he was the only kid in his class to befriend the special needs kid in a class of 15. When he was five he started public school in Orlando. After a few years he was diagnosed with ADHD and started medication, which at the time I didn't know that I could have explored other options. Sometimes when he got frustrated and didn't know how to handle it he would slam his head into the ground. I would have to sit on the ground and try stopping him or try to let him hit his head on my leg instead of the ground. He settled down with the meds and was a good student. Brandon had a diverse group of friends in the neighborhood. He was on different sports teams in the community, always making new friends.

Brandon always liked learning and school. Science and math were his favorite subjects. He liked to take things apart and see how they worked. Sometimes he would try and put them back together. I remember at one point he had a baby monitor and did something to it and he could hear the neighbor on it and was fascinated. Over the years he had changed meds many times to try and get the right fit for him. He started seeing a counselor also with the meds. During this time he attended kindergarten to grade 6. During this time we went on trips together, for example to New Orleans and Washington DC. Every new place we would go he would want to learn the historical information. He was a very inquisitive child.

We moved back to the Bahamas when Brandon was starting 7th grade. I felt it was a good move since we would be close to my family. He attended one of the top private schools in the country. During his time there he became fascinated with science and history. His two favorite teachers were Mrs. Arthur and Mr. Murray. I have always known Brandon to be a compassionate individual when he was in high school he volunteered for Horses and the handicapped. Where he would help disabled and children on the spectrum, ride horses.

Over time I eventually found myself in a relationship and introduced him to Brandon he did not take to this well. I figured it was because for 13 years it was just us now there was

someone else in the picture. We got married and had a son Hunter. During which my husband and son grew to hate each other. My husband was so mean to him and disgusting when my son was around that he would just stay in his room to avoid him. I feel this had a big effect on him. I had eventually asked my husband to leave and at first Brandon was upset because he said he didn't want Hunter to grow up without a father like he did, but now he realizes that it is better for Hunter that he is not around. I know that Brandon loves his brother more than anything. Whenever he was around he would play with him and read to him he is a very caring person.

After graduating high school Brandon attended USF where he wanted to be a physicist, yet was having problems with his calculus which he needed for the degree he wanted so after failing that and losing hope I pulled him out of college to take a break and reassess his life. Brandon then went to live with his father and that was a disaster they didn't get along so he with the help of his father he joined the National Guard. I feel that he made it through boot camp and he felt he finally had something to be proud of and have others proud of him. After everything with the training in the National Guard was complete he decided to be stationed in Tampa and try college again. That did not work out for him as a tragic event happened that forever will change his life. He walked into his apartment to find his roommate's murder in cold blood, later to find out it was done by his best friend. He was later arrested for possessing unregistered bomb making materials and served 5 years in federal prison. During this time i do not think he got the help he need to come to terms with what happened,

He was then released and started a welding program at a trade school and had one last class to complete for his degree. But we ended up here.

I deeply believe in Brandon's ability to learn from this experience and become a productive member of society. I humbly ask your honor to consider a lenient sentence so that he can make the effort to turn his life around. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Brigitte Chantalle Russell-Hilts